

Be Strong

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Be Strong

by [blacktofade](#)

Summary

A hunter breaks into Stiles' house and Stiles deals with them.

Notes

Because [Grimm](#) and I were talking about what constitutes as angst and I said miscommunication and she said hunting babies.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Stiles is sipping a cup of coffee in the kitchen, quietly watching James pick at his scrambled eggs when he hears a muffled thud from upstairs. He pauses, spares a glance at the ceiling, and listens for a moment. James doesn't even seem to notice, still happily chewing away, and Stiles likes to think that James' hearing is just as good as his papa's, or maybe even better since he's so young. If James isn't worried, Stiles figures he shouldn't be either.

Through the window above the sink, he can see a few birds darting around in the garden. One of them probably hit the window in the attic. It wouldn't be the first time it's happened.

"Is that good?" Stiles asks, and James hums with contentment, oblivious of the bits of egg stuck to his chin.

Stiles grabs a segment of kitchen paper from the counter to his right and steps closer to clean him up.

“As messy as your papa,” he murmurs and James pulls his face out of Stiles’ hold with a grunt of annoyance and goes back to eating. “As hungry as your papa, too, huh?”

“Gonna be strong,” James tells him and Stiles gently cards his fingers through his hair.

“Is that right?”

James nods and says, “Like Papa.”

“You can tell him that when he gets home.”

“When?” James asks and Stiles checks his phone for new messages; there aren’t any.

“Tonight. He’s probably landing at the airport right now.”

James doesn’t say anything more and Stiles carefully flattens his hair back down.

“I’m sure he’s brought you a present.”

Stiles knows it for a fact because Derek had called, wondering if he thought James would prefer a whale or a dolphin stuffed animal. Stiles is pretty sure Derek bought both, though, because he’d still sounded indecisive before hanging up. He’s been away for two weeks now, though, and Stiles is more than ready to have him back.

“You want some juice?” he asks as James picks at the remains of his food, and James nods.

He pulls a plastic cup from the cupboard and opens the fridge, but freezes when there’s an unmistakable creak from the floorboards above. This time, James is staring up at the ceiling, too, his expression concerned.

“Dad?” he asks. “There’s someone upstairs.”

Stiles glances across at the back door and quickly moves to lock it. The front door should still be bolted since he hasn’t left the house yet, but he’ll need to double check.

“C’mere, James,” he says gently, holding out his hand and trying to keep his emotions even. He doesn’t need a panicking four year old to deal with too.

James carefully slips from his chair at the kitchen table and moves to grab Stiles’ hand, his other hand clutching at the hem of Stiles’ shirt.

“Stay close to me, okay?” he says, keeping his voice low and James’ eyes are already wet, but no tears have fallen yet.

Quietly, Stiles leads them out of the kitchen, through the living room to check the front door, which is still locked tightly as he’d thought. The door to the basement sits to his left with the stairs leading to the second floor in front of him. He guides James left, cursing the creaking handle as he pulls the door to the basement open. Fortunately, with a long running history of having to deal with intruders, they put a panic room in when they built the house.

Derek had insisted on it, and Stiles is thankful now.

“You remember what we told you?” Stiles murmurs. “You need to be brave like Papa and stay hidden, okay? Just for a little while.”

At the bottom of the stairs, the panic room is on the right, and Stiles quickly punches in the code to

unlock it before guiding James inside.

“You need to stay here. I’m going to check upstairs and make sure it’s safe, okay?”

“*Don’t*—” James sniffles, tears finally dripping down his cheeks in a way that breaks Stiles’ heart. “Call Grandpa.”

“I will,” Stiles promises, “but I need to be upstairs to do that. It’s just for a second.”

He stoops the best that he can to press a kiss to James’ cheek and hold him close for a brief moment.

“Be good.”

It kills him to shut the door on James’ ruddy, wet face, but he has to. He hears the locks click back into place and he heads upstairs once more.

There’s no other sign of an intruder, but it could be a professional. He makes his way back into the kitchen and pulls his phone out, dialing his dad’s number. When he answers, Stiles jumps right into it.

“I think there are hunters in the house,” he says and there’s a terrifying pause on the other end where Stiles worries that the call has dropped.

“You need to call the station,” his dad says, his voice oddly cold. “I’m out by the highway.”

“What? Why are you all the way out there?”

“We got an anonymous tip about a suspicious abandoned vehicle.”

Fuck, Stiles thinks but doesn’t say. Someone lured his dad away to keep him from interfering. Definitely a professional then.

“Can you call Derek and leave a voicemail if he doesn’t answer? I’m calling the cops.”

“Be safe,” his dad insists and Stiles hangs up to dial 9-1-1.

It’s as he’s listing his address to the operator that there’s a loud crack from upstairs, like someone trying to kick down a door. They’re probably in the attic trying to make their way downstairs. If Stiles is quick, he can grab his gun from the safe in his office. He keeps the phone pinned between his ear and shoulder as he rushes to the opposite side of the house and punches in the combination for his safe.

With shaking hands, it takes two attempts to get into it, but then the training from his dad and Derek quickly filters through his mind as he loads his 9mm. When there’s another bang from upstairs, he hangs up his phone, knowing the operator has enough information to get to him, and not wanting to get cut off from James in the basement.

The thing is, is that Stiles is four months along with their second kid, which means he isn’t exactly stealthy. He also isn’t as fast as he usually is. He makes it halfway through the living room before he hears the thud of footsteps on the stairs. He positions himself carefully, raises his gun, and flicks the safety off.

“They said you’d put up a fight,” the man says as he steps down low enough to see Stiles and Stiles bristles.

“Go fuck yourself,” he snaps.

The man laughs and makes the mistake of pausing where he stands, because it gives Stiles enough time to line up his shot and pull the trigger. It hits the man in the dead center of his chest and he rocks with the force, letting out a gasping breath. But there’s no blood and he doesn’t fall back, which means he’s probably wearing a vest.

“Impressive aim,” the man says, and Stiles takes pride in the fact that it sounds pained.

But there’s pure anger on the man’s face as he pulls a knife from his belt, taking an unsteady step down the stairs, his sights set clearly on Stiles.

Stiles lines up a second shot, but misses the man’s arm by a few inches. Instead, the bullet lodges into the wall beside one of Stiles and Derek’s wedding photos, which just serves to piss Stiles off more. They’re going to have to fix that as well as the door to the attic now.

“You just need to give us what we want, Stiles,” he says, and Stiles knows exactly what they want.

Stiles’ pregnancies haven’t exactly been natural, which has caught the attention of hunters. They’ve been trying to get Stiles since he first fell pregnant with James and he suspects they now also want James himself.

“Get the fuck out of my house.”

He lowers his gun and the man smirks as though he’s already won. Which is when Stiles shoots him in the thigh. It’s satisfying to watch the man fall down the last remaining stairs before landing in a heap at the bottom, where he lets out a pained noise and writhes.

“You fucking—” the man starts, clutching at his thigh with his free hand, his knife still clenched tightly in the other.

Stiles knows he needs to disarm him before he attempts to throw it, and he shuffles closer, gun still aimed threateningly at him.

“Don’t fucking move,” Stiles snaps, which is precisely what the man doesn’t do.

Stiles knows he should have expected it, but at any other time, he could easily sidestep the swing of the man’s arm, but with the extra weight on him, he’s unsteady, and the hit connects. The blade stings as it cuts through the thin material of his sweats and drags across his lower leg, but Stiles still kicks out, knocking the knife away, skidding it across the wooden floor. He also takes a moment to stomp on the man’s fingers.

Derek complains on a regular basis about Stiles’ feet and how cold and boney they are, which means that even without shoes, he knows he can ruin the hunter’s day by bringing his heel down upon his knuckles. He feels them pop underfoot and he wouldn’t be surprised if a few are now broken.

He’s not the slightest bit apologetic for it, because he can feel blood dripping down over his ankle and the cut is beginning to throb.

“Give me one reason,” Stiles says, pointing his gun directly at the hunter’s head, which he thinks is only fair for threatening his family.

There’s a loud bang and the hunter should be glad Stiles doesn’t have a trigger finger because the front door crashes in, but Stiles doesn’t even flinch. For one awful second, Stiles thinks the hunter

has backup that's coming to snatch him from behind, but then Deputy Mirales' voice cuts through.

"Easy, Stiles," she says gently, but it takes a moment for it to register before Stiles finally puts the safety on and lowers his gun.

Stiles can feel the adrenaline buzzing through his body and he glances over at Vanessa, his hands beginning to shake.

"Are you hurt?" she asks and Stiles tries to catalog himself.

"My leg," he says. "I don't know how bad."

"There's an ambulance on the way."

She pulls her cuffs out and isn't exactly gentle when she grabs the hunter and rolls him over onto his front. He's smart enough not to put up a fight and lets her handcuff him.

"You thought I'd get hurt?" Stiles asks, and she glances over in the middle of patting the hunter down for further weapons.

"No," she says, gesturing to the hunter with her head. "It was for him."

"You thought I'd hurt him?"

"No," she says, face serious. "But I knew Derek would if you didn't already."

"He's not home," Stiles says. "Can you get him out of here so I can bring James back up?"

"Sure," she says. "Can we get your gun?"

Stiles knows they'll need it for evidence, and Stiles carefully unloads it and sets it on the table by the front door for her to grab when she has a free hand. While she wrangles the hunter into a standing position, Stiles makes his way towards the basement door. As he begins to pull it shut behind him, he catches sight of two more officers entering the house.

His leg starts to ache as he hobbles down the stairs, but he can hear the muted sound of James crying in the panic room and he knows there isn't much that would keep him away from him. His hands shake as he enters the code to unlock the door and the first thing he sees is James' terrified face before James realizes who it is and launches himself at Stiles.

"Dad!" he yells, bursting into a fresh round of tears as Stiles drops to a crouch and pulls him close.

James curls his arms around his neck and Stiles knows he really shouldn't, but he can't help but scoop James up, holding him close and pressing his face into the curve of his shoulder. Utter relief washes over him as he realizes he's safe and so is his son.

"You were so brave," he tells James, "and I love you so much."

James doesn't reply, but lets out a hiccupping breath and clings tighter to Stiles. Stiles takes a moment to appreciate the warmth and weight of James in his arms, before James pulls away, face turned towards the ceiling.

"Papa," he says, voice hoarse, and that's enough for Stiles to turn and head for the stairs, carefully carrying James up and making sure to put himself between James and the bloodstain on the floor to keep him from seeing too much.

Derek's standing in the doorway, his face devastated until he spots Stiles and James to the side. He doesn't say a word, but immediately moves closer, pulling Stiles towards him and curling his other arm around James. There are a million things Derek could say—that he's glad they're safe, that he doesn't know what he'd do if he lost them, that he loves them both so much—but Stiles suspects he's heard them all before. And he knows, because he'd be the same way if it were Derek with James.

Stiles gives him a minute, letting Derek breathe in their combined scents and rub his face against Stiles' neck and shoulder to add his own.

"How was the flight?" he asks and Derek grunts as though it's not important.

"I left my bag at the airport," he admits quietly and Stiles can only imagine the panic Derek had felt when Stiles' dad had called him.

"We can pick it up later," Stiles says, rubbing his hand over Derek's bicep and grounding himself with the touch.

"I left my car there too."

Stiles pulls back just far enough to meet Derek's gaze.

"You ran?" he asks, before snorting and adding, "Don't answer that; of course you did."

"I was worried," Derek grits out as though it's something to be ashamed of and Stiles kisses him softly.

"I know. I'm sorry."

Derek kisses him again and then presses his lips to the crown of James' head.

"Let me take him," Derek says, hands easily scooping James into his own arms and relieving Stiles. "Go get checked out."

Stiles wants to make a joke about being checked out by him, wants to throw in a wink and maybe goose Derek a little, but instead he sighs and nods.

"Yeah, okay," he relents. "Come with me."

He takes Derek's hand in his own and leads them out the front door. There are a handful of patrol cars littering the street and two ambulances. The hunter, cuffed and clearly not going anywhere, is being loaded into one of them. Stiles ignores him and pulls Derek towards the other.

The EMT that greets him looks familiar, but he doesn't remember her name. She's careful when she helps him take a seat in the back so that she can look at his leg.

Stiles keeps his eyes on Derek, on the way he tucks his head against James' and presses sporadic kisses to it. James has settled now, but Stiles knows he'll be buzzing for a while. Having Derek home will definitely help. Derek leans back and uses the hem of his shirt to wipe James' nose, and rubs at the tear tracks along his face with gentle fingers.

"You must have been brave," Derek tells him, voice low. "Did you do exactly what Dad told you to?"

"Yeah," James murmurs, and Derek meets Stiles' gaze and offers up a comforting smile. "I didn't

even shift.”

Stiles stares at James in surprise because they’ve been working on control for weeks, but he still hasn’t quite mastered it. How he managed to control it in a stressful situation is beyond Stiles. Stiles is going to have to buy him a toy or two.

“It won’t need stitches,” the EMT declares. “I’ll wrap it and you’ll need to keep it clean and dry for the rest of the week.”

Stiles nods and lets her do her job.

“What about the baby?” Derek asks.

“Did you fall?” she asks Stiles, and Stiles shakes his head. “When’s your next appointment?”

“Two weeks.”

“Schedule something for this week,” she says, “the soonest you can get. Just as a precaution.”

“Should we be worried?” Stiles asks and she shakes her head.

“You didn’t fall and your heart rate is good. It would just be to double check everything is okay.”

Stiles nods, but Derek looks tense. Stiles nudges him with the foot not being held by the EMT.

“I’ll make an appointment tonight. It’s fine. C’mon, help me back to the house.”

The EMT double checks the bandage around Stiles’ leg and then puts a guiding hand on his shoulder as he climbs out of the ambulance.

“Call your regular physician if anything looks infected.”

He nods and lets Derek settle one warm palm to the small of his back as they head towards the house. As they reach the front door, another patrol car drives up, but this one Stiles recognizes and it parks in their driveway in front of the garage.

Stiles’ dad hops out and the relief is visible on his face as he moves towards Stiles to gather him into a hug. Stiles accepts it, even despite the uncomfortable press of his stomach between them.

“We’re fine,” he murmurs. “We’re all fine.”

Stiles’ dad lets him go with one last squeeze before moving over to Derek, carefully running his fingers through James’ hair. He knows better than to take him out of Derek’s grip, but he rubs a hand between his shoulders.

“You doing alright, James?” he asks and James peers over at him, clearly exhausted from the adrenaline wearing off, but he rests his chin on Derek’s shoulder and attempts a nod. Stiles’ dad presses a kiss to the side of his head and then gestures for them to go inside.

The bloodstain has gone from the floor, but there’s still a bullet hole in the wall.

“They filled me in on the radio as I drove here,” his dad says. “They want to get a statement from you about everything.”

Stiles groans and hangs his head, “*Dad*,” he whines and his dad pulls a face as though he’s expected it the whole time.

“I made a few suggestions and they’ve decided that in your condition, you can stop by the station tomorrow instead.”

“I knew there was a reason why we chose to have another kid,” Stiles jokes, sagging in relief, and Derek raises an eyebrow.

“We chose?” Derek deadpans.

Stiles’ dad shakes his head and Stiles rolls his eyes. Despite all the jokes, Stiles’ pregnancy *was* planned, though there was definitely plenty of practicing beforehand.

“Okay, I’ll stop by in the morning,” Stiles says. “They know where to find me anyway.”

“I’m going to put James down for a nap,” Derek murmurs as Stiles glances over, finding James now slumped bonelessly in Derek’s grip.

“He’s not going to want to be alone,” Stiles says and Stiles’ dad makes a noise of agreement.

“You two go on up with him,” he says, “I’ll clear up down here and make something to eat. I haven’t taken lunch yet anyway.”

Stiles nods and leads the way upstairs, holding the door open to James’ room for Derek before shutting it behind them. James doesn’t even stir as Derek sets him down on the bed and drapes a blanket over him, but he makes a noise of contentment as he settles against the soft mattress.

Derek smooths out the blanket with one hand, watching James for a long moment, clearly deep in thought. Eventually, he turns to face Stiles. His expression hits like a punch to the gut, and Stiles moves closer, curling his arms around Derek’s shoulders and pulling him in.

“We’re okay,” he says softly.

Derek keeps one hand pressed to Stiles’ back, the other he twists to rest against the side of Stiles’ bump. The baby has been active since Stiles’ heart kicked into overgear sneaking through the house, but now it’s just idly kicking and shifting. He knows Derek will feel it and he hopes it brings him comfort.

“We missed you,” he murmurs and Derek tucks his face against Stiles’ throat.

“Missed you, too.”

Derek stays tucked against him for a long while, until Stiles’ feet tingle and begin to lose feeling. Derek already seems to know, though, and he pulls back, pressing a kiss to the corner of Stiles’ mouth.

“C’mon,” Stiles says. “We can’t stay here all day.”

Derek makes a noise as though that’s exactly what he wants to do anyway, and Stiles smiles.

“Maybe tomorrow,” he says. “After you’ve covered up the bullet holes.”

Derek frowns and Stiles laughs quietly, kissing Derek’s downturned lips.

“C’mon, it’s kind of funny,” Stiles says, knowing that it isn’t, not even a little bit. “They thought they could take us down. They clearly don’t know us at all. I fucked him up pretty good, too,” he adds with a grin and Derek looks to be on the verge of rolling his eyes, which Stiles counts as a win.

“Get out,” Derek grunts, nudging him softly towards the door and Stiles goes willingly, laughing and loving the way Derek’s hand settles against his back as though it’s meant to be there always.

He really hopes it is.

End Notes

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